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CUBAN INDEPENDENCE—WAR WITH SPAIN.

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There are times and conditions when a war-made hell is to be preferred to hells created and existing by other means, and a time and a condition now exists that warrants war—war, that the Spanish-created hell in Cuba may be destroyed, and that that Spanish-created hell of February 15, 1898, may be avenged.

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S P E E C H

OF

HON. RICHARD R. KENNEY,

OF DELAWARE,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 1898.

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WASHINGTON.

1898.

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Mr. W. A. Smith

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SPEECH  
OF  
HON RICHARD R. KENNEY.

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The Senate having under consideration the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the Committee on Foreign Relations of this body be directed to report at the earliest practicable moment, and without waiting for the concurrence or advice of any department of the Government, what action, if any, in view of the loss of the battle ship *Maine* and the destruction of the lives of 266 American sailors, and in view of the well-known deplorable condition of Affairs in the Island of Cuba, is required from the Congress of the United States to sustain and vindicate the honor and dignity of this nation, and to meet and answer the obligations of humanity imposed on this Government as the result of the condition of affairs in said island, and that said committee report by bill, resolution, or otherwise, as it may deem most expedient—

Mr. KENNEY said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I feel that little can be said that will be new or original on the Cuban situation. The field of argument and oratory has indeed been well covered by the distinguished Senators who have already spoken on this most important question; and were it not from a sense of duty that I feel I owe to those who I have the honor in part to represent on this floor, I should not trespass upon the time of the Senate.

Mr. President, there is not in all this land a constituency more united in favor of Cuba's independency than mine. The people of no State have more earnestly espoused the cause of suffering Cuba than those of Delaware, and were I to fail to voice their sentiments in this regard and for them to speak to all the world, I would fail in my clear duty to those I represent.

Many times during the last half century have the people of Cuba risen in rebellion and by force of arms endeavored to free themselves from the bondage of Spanish misrule, and, although often defeated, have never lost heart. Revolt has followed revolt, and repeated failures have been the results thereof, but the spirit of freedom was planted deep in the hearts of the people, and, watered by the patriot blood of thousands slain, grew until to-day it attracts the attention of all the world.

The struggles of the people of Cuba for freedom are known to all students of history, and need no recital from me. Seldom, if ever, in the history of the world, has there been such an example of unselfish suffering for liberty's sake as by the people of that unhappy island; and if ever there was a people who deserved the aid and sympathy of the civilized world, they are the people of Cuba.

On May 20, 1897, Mr. President, the Senate passed by a vote of 41 to 14 the following joint resolution:

A joint resolution declaring that a condition of public war exists in Cuba, and that strict neutrality shall be maintained.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a condition of public war exists between the Government of Spain and the Government proclaimed and for some time maintained by force of arms by the people of Cuba, and that the United States of America shall maintain a strict neutrality between the contending powers, according to each all the rights of belligerents in the ports and territory of the United States.*

The joint resolution went to the House of Representatives and was, for reasons satisfactory to that body and the Administration, suffered to sleep the sleep that knows no waking. Had that resolution been considered by the other House of Congress and concurred in, and the Administration, acting in obedience thereto, recognized the belligerence of the Cuban insurgents, to-day Cuba would be free and independent, and so without the help of any nation of the earth—thousands of the now dead would be living, untold suffering and misery would have been averted, and millions of treasure saved. Yes, Mr. President, had belligerent rights been granted to the Cubans, they would have worked out their own salvation, and the United States would not have been compelled to adopt measures contrary to its traditions and to have spent millions of the people's money. The responsibility for this will be, is fixed by the unerring judgment of the American people.

Mr. President, who is it that refuses to the people of Cuba freedom? The Spanish Crown. That nation, through whose instrumentality (by Christopher Columbus in 1492) the islands of the West Indies were discovered, and who, taking advantage of the credulity of the innocent and peaceful aborigines they found there, first enslaved, then debauched, and then persecuted and murdered until for more than two centuries they have been extinct; that nation that for more than four centuries has written its history in

blood; that nation that conceived and brought forth the Inquisition, the doings of which put to shame the tortures of the Prince of Hell himself.

Even in this age of enlightenment and Christian civilization the Spanish Government lives in the past; goes back to the Dark Ages, to ignorance, bigotry, and intolerance. It is this Spain that refuses liberty to the people of Cuba; this nation that in this civilized age conducts war not against armed men in the field, but on women and the helpless; that uses starvation as its chief weapon and torture as its ammunition. It is Spain that holds in bondage the people of Cuba; that nation that produced and honored an Alva and created a Weyler, the butcher; that nation so senseless to honor and the instincts of humanity that starving thousands awaken no chord of sympathy in its breast; that nation, which by reason of its brutal misrule and cruelties, though once the possessor of this continent, to-day owns Cuba alone; that nation which on the 15th day of February, A. D. 1898, committed the crime of the nineteenth century—the destruction of the *Maine* and the murder of 266 American seamen in the harbor of Havana.

Mr. President, was there ever before in the history of the world a more diabolical crime? Was there ever such a foul murder so long unavenged? I see, as I speak, the red flash from that hell-fired mine, and the crash of iron and steel together, with the mangled forms of the brave sailors and seamen, and hear their shrieks and cries of pain and terror, as crushed and shapeless they are hurled into eternity.

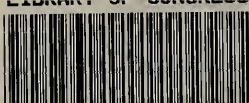
Mr. President, it has been the policy of this Government to be at peace with all the nations of the earth, and that policy has been most faithfully carried out, and war has been entered into only as a last resort—only when every other means has failed. The people of the United States do not to-day desire war for war's sake. They, many of them, have seen war and know its meaning, the lesson having been learned as participants in great and bloody battles. They know that "war is hell." Yet, Mr. President, there are times and conditions when a war-made hell is to be preferred to hells created and existing by other means, and a time and a condition now exists that warrants war—war that the Spanish-created hell in Cuba may be destroyed and that that Spanish-created hell of February 15, 1898, may be avenged.

No longer, Mr. President, will American freemen witness starvation, outrage, and crime in Cuba and remain idle. No longer will they permit to go unavenged the blood shed in Havana Harbor. No longer can pleas of "wait a little longer" hold them back from a duty so clear and plain. No longer can the whim of the administrative branch of the Government and diplomatic clap-trap deter them from meting out justice to the perpetrators of these crimes and outrages.

The honor of the nation is at stake. Humanity demands action, action that is plain—grim war. The cold clay, the speechless lips and pulseless hearts of the *Maine's* dead heroes cry out to us for vengeance; the starving, diseased Cubans pray to us for help. Can we refuse to hear these appeals? No, Mr. President; American manhood and American chivalry give back the answer that innocent blood shall be avenged, starvation and crime shall cease, Cuba shall be free. For such reasons, for such causes, America can and will fight. For such causes and for such reasons we should have war.







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